

Thank you for joining the Virginia's Congregations for Million Hearts initiative. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) enlists the support of faith based organizations to help raise awareness and prevent cardiovascular disease and stroke by focusing on hypertension control. The initiative is designed to help guide congregations toward a heart-healthy lifestyle. Below are some suggestions and action steps of heart-healthy activities for your congregations. These are merely suggestions, but if you have an idea for an activity that we don't have listed, please let us know and we will be sure to add it! Please feel free to contact us if you need assistance or have questions.

Before you start your initiative:

- Plan a meeting with your congregational leader(s) to get support for your activity.
- Share your ideas with a variety of congregants to gain their support. It's important to get support from a variety of members and leaders to help ensure a successful program.
- You may want to ask about the specific health concerns of your congregation? For example if a number of people are experiencing high blood pressure – then a program or activity could target that condition.
- You will want to determine if there are any members who are health professionals that would be willing to support an individual event or ongoing assistance.
- You will need to decide who is going to be the key person to lead the events/activities.
- Consider the following questions in the planning process for your activity/event:
 - What: What do I want to do/achieve?
 - Who: Who will be the event's leader(s), potential partners and collaborators, target audience (young adult, middle age adults, seniors, mix)? Will it be open or closed to the public?
 - When: When will the event take place (day/night, weekday/weekend, Sunday following service, holiday or organization's event day) and will it be reoccurring or a one-time event?
 - Where: Where will the event take place (at your facility, fellowship hall, partner's facility, public facility, community facility)?
 - How: How will we organize the event? Consider all ideas regarding creating partnerships, offering prizes, providing recognition, whether it will be open or closed to the public, and engage the target audience (young adult, middle-age adults, and seniors) in planning.
- Organize a "Kick-Off Celebration" for your event(s).

Here are some suggested activities followed by 10 planning action steps:

Host a Blood Pressure Screening Event	Walking Initiative	Heart Healthy Cooking Demonstration
Host a Zumba	Yoga or Exercise Class	Distribute Blood Pressure Wallet Cards
Organize a Blood Pressure Biggest Loser Competition	Organize a Walk or Run for Healthy Heart	Establish a Congregational Garden:

1. Designate a leader(s) and identify potential partner(s)
2. Name the event (e.g. Blood Pressure Screening Event, Heart-Healthy Sunday, Exercise for Heart Health)
3. Decide venue, start and end times (day/nights or both), before/during/after church service, target audience and whether open/closed to the public
4. Pair the members or assign teams as required or work with/challenge another congregation
5. Have members bring to church their families, relatives, friends, coworkers, and neighbors
6. Identify possible resources and support items (e.g. trained members in your congregation, VDH/Local Health Department, local healthcare system, local gym or YMCA, Local Medical Reserve Corps, Walgreens/CVS pharmacies, Support items: e.g. pedometers, reflectors, routes, etc. for walking events, cooking utensil, healthy foods choices for health cooking events)
7. Identify possible partners (e.g. VDH/Local Health Department, local healthcare system, American Heart Association, Virginia Health Quality Center, local Medical Reserve Corps, Walgreens/CVS pharmacies)
8. Education/communication: use pulpit, bulletin, flyers, word of mouth, door-to-door, business, local/partnering organizations and community and public leaders/officials
9. When possible, have door prizes, recognitions, or attractions to encourage participation
10. Get feedback from the congregation and/or participants to mark success and assess areas for improvement

Here are some suggested events followed by 10 planning action steps:

Host a Presentation(s) or Speaker(s)	Host a Health Fair	Host a Health Movie Screening and Discussion
Participate in American Heart Association Sodium Pledge:	Post a health bulletin board	Establish a No Fried Food/Chicken Policy
Participate in Virginia's Tobacco Free Pledge	Heart Health Game (Jeopardy and/or Feud) event	Establish a No Sugary Drink Policy

1. Designate a leader and identify potential partner(s)
2. Name the event (e.g. :Heart Education, Heart-Healthy Movie Event, and Family Health Bulletin)
3. Decide venue, times to update the board (before/during/after church service, target audience and messages/resources). Information may be included in the Sunday's program sheet or other event's sheets
4. Make event/board visible to your audience. May share the information via Facebook or other sources
5. Pair the members or assign teams as required or invite other congregations
6. Identify possible resources (e.g. member(s) in your congregation, VDH/Local Health Department, local health system's representative, local colleges or schools, local gym or YMCA, healthcare system, Walgreens/CVS pharmacies)
7. Identify possible partners (e.g. trained member(s) in your congregation, VDH/Local Health Department, local healthcare system, local colleges or schools, gym or YMCA, local Medical Reserve Corps, Walgreens/CVS pharmacies)
8. Education/communication: use pulpit, bulletin, flyers, word of mouth, door-to-door, business, local/partnering organizations, community and public leaders/officials
9. When possible, have door prizes, recognitions, or attractions to increase foot traffic
10. Get feedback from the congregation and/or participants to mark success and assess areas for improvement

Contacts and Websites of Potential Partners:

Virginia's Congregations for Million Hearts:

- <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/omhhe/VA100congregations.htm>

Virginia Department of Health Local Health Districts' Directory:

- <http://vdhweb/HealthDistricts/documents/pdf/Districtdirectory.pdf>

American Heart Association, Richmond:

- http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Affiliate/Greater-Richmond-Home-Page_UCM_MAA014_AffiliatePage.jsp.

Virginia Medical Reserve Corps:

- <https://www.vamrc.org/vvhs/?action=welcome.contacts>

Virginia Health Quality Center:

- <http://www.vhqc.org/>

Virginia Nurses Association:

- <http://www.virginianurses.com/>

Virginia Colleges and Universities:

- https://www.google.com/search?q=virginia+colleges+and+universities&oq=virginia+colleges&gs_l=serp.1.1.0j0i20j0l8.3443.6329.0.9584.8.5.0.3.3.0.109.483.3j2.5.0....0...1c.1.64.serp..0.8.515.Tl2aifdXUjc

YMCA of Greater Richmond:

- http://www.ymcarichmond.org/?gclid=CjwKEAjwh8exBRDyyqqH9pvf1ncSJAAu4OE34pu-IOjzYg3-gDpFNvjc7VKk-Dzn5CwWsgovwKlx_RoCcyXw_wcB

Virginia Hospitals and Healthcare Systems:

- <http://theagapecenter.com/Hospitals/Virginia.htm>

Virginia Pharmacies:

- <http://www.superpages.com/yellowpages/C-Pharmacies/S-VA/>